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Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NASSAU

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 028845

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT PINS UK US

SUBJECT: ESQUIRE MAGAZINE ARTICLE ON ABACO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

REFERENCE: NASSAU 179

1. SINCE RECEIPT OF REFTEL WE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTING TO VERIFY STATEMENTS AND ALLEGATIONS MADE IN SUBJECT ARTICLE REGARDING THE ABACO INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF CERTAIN US CITIZENS IN THAT ENTERPRISE. AS EMBASSY CAN APPRECIATE, SUCH VERIFICATION IS A DIFFICULT TASK: FOLLOWING THEREFORE REPRESENTS ONLY A PARTIAL RESPONSE TO REFTEL. AS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, IT WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO EMBASSY.

2. EMBASSY WILL NOTE THAT MEETING OF MITCHELL WERBELL AND

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OTHER COLLABORATORS WHICH AUTHOR ANDREW ST. GEORGE USES AS

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THE PRINCIPAL FOCAL POINT FOR THE ARTICLE CORRESPONDS IN TIME TO A MEETING WERBELL HELD IN WASHINGTON AT THE SAME RESTAURANT WHICH WAS REPORTED TO THE FBI AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISSEMINATED BY THE BUREAU. THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE ALMOST TEN MONTHS AGO. WE HAVE SEEN NOTHING THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS OF OTHER SERIOUS ACTIVITIES BY WERBELL AND HIS ASSOCIATES SINCE THAT FBI REPORT.

OUR RECENT CHECK WITH FBI FAILED TO DISCLOSE ANY INFORMATION WHICH COULD EITHER PROVE OR DISPROVE ABOVE ARTICLE'S ALLEGATIONS ON WERBELL GROUP'S ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING MILITARY TRAINING IN THE US IN SUPPORT OF AIM.

3. AS EMBASSY IS AWARE, MITCHELL WERBELL IS A LICENSED ARMS DEALER AND HAS A SIGNIFICANT STORE OF WEAPONS AT HIS HEADQUARTERS AT POWDER SPRINGS, GEORGIA. WERBELL IS KNOWN TO HAVE SOLD WEAPONS TO VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS AROUND THE WORLD, OBTAINING MUNITIONS CONTROL APPROVAL FOR THE SALE OF SUCH WEAPONS. FURTHERMORE, WERBELL HAS GONE OUT OF HIS WAY TO SEEK PUBLICITY OVER PAST YEARS. EMBASSY WILL PROBABLY RECALL LONG COVER STORY WHICH APPEARED IN THE MIAMI HERALD'S SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT ON JULY 1, 1973. SUCH BLATANT SEEKING AFTER THE LIMELIGHT WOULD APPEAR CONTRADICTORY IN SOMEONE SERIOUSLY INVOLVED IN COVERT ACTIVITIES.

4. AUTHOR OF ESQUIRE ARTICLE, ANDREW ST. GEORGE, IS APPARENTLY A FREE LANCE WRITER WHO HAS WRITTEN SPORADICALLY ABOUT THE CARIBBEAN AND LA IN THE PAST. HE PRODUCED AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CASTRO IN 1958, FOR EXAMPLE, AND HAS DONE OTHER PIECES WHICH TENDED TO BE SOMEWHAT SENSATIONALIST AND FAR-FETCHED. AUTHOR APPARENTLY HAS CONNECTIONS WITH CERTAIN CUBAN EXILES IN THE US WHOM HE HAS DRAWN ON AS AN INFORMATION SOURCE. A CAREFUL READING OF ST. GEORGE'S ESQUIRE PIECE WOULD INCLINE ONE TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAD DRAWN HEAVILY ON THE MIAMI HERALD ARTICLE (OP.CIT) IN RESEARCHING IT.

5. RESPONSE TO ETIENNE DUPUCH'S EDITORIAL IN NASSAU CONFIDENTIAL

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TRIBUNE AS PROPOSED PARA 3 REFTEL SEEMS APPROPRIATE REACTION TO ESQUIRE ARTICLE. AT EMBASSY'S DISCRETION, SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE SOUGHT TO DISCUSS ARTICLE IN LOW KEY, INFORMAL WAY WITH FOREIGN SECRETARY ADDERLEY, TAKING THE SAME LINE AS IN THE RESPONSE TO DUPUCH. IN SUCH CONVERSATION IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO MAKE THE ADDITIONAL POINT THAT WE WOULD HOPE GCOB ON ITS PART WOULD SHARE WITH US ANY HARD INFORMATION WHICH COMES ITS WAY

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REGARDING ACTIVITIES OF ANY AMERICANS INVOLVED WITH AIM,
ESPECIALLY ACTIVITIES OF A MILITARY OR OF A WARLIKE
NATURE WHICH THE DEPARTMENT COULD BRING TO THE ATTENTION
OF THE FBI AND THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FOR POSSIBLE
PROSECUTION UNDER OPERATIVE US STATUTES. KISSINGER

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